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TWO GENESIS CLIENT FIRMS FIRST IN STATE TO RECEIVE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE FEDERAL CONTRACTS

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark.— Two local technology-based companies have been awarded nearly \$1.4 million in Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II contracts as a result of a new, streamlined process provided by the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority (Authority). Authority president John W. Ahlen will present the almost \$350,000 in matching funds to Arkansas Microelectronics Development Corp. (AMDC) and Space Photonics at a press conference at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9 at the University of Arkansas College of Engineering GENESIS Technology Incubator.

Otto Loewer, dean of the College of Engineering and John English, executive director of GENESIS, will also participate in the press conference.

The two firms, both GENESIS clients, received the SBIR Fast Track contracts as a result of the Authority's effort to streamline the process and allow for the use of Phase I matching funds in applications for Phase II funding. This is the first time that an Arkansas company has received the highly competitive award. Separate awards presented to two companies are considered a significant achievement for the state.

The SBIR Fast Track initiative requires a third party, initially interpreted to mean the private sector, to contribute matching funds—25 cents for every federal contract dollar. Authority representatives, working closely with the U of A, were able to arrange

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for state funds to be used for the third party contribution for both companies. Arkansas is the only state that has been successful in securing a Fast Track award in this fashion.

“Companies like Arkansas Microelectronics Development Corporation and Space Photonics generally locate in places like Silicon Valley,” said Ahlen. “But because of world-class research facilities like the High Density Electronics Center (HiDEC) and prominent researchers located at the U of A, they felt it was to their advantage to locate in northwest Arkansas. We feel strongly that technology-based companies like these are essential to the economic development of the state.”

AMDC has received a \$632,000 SBIR Phase II contract from the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. AMDC focuses on processes to make capacitors occupy less space on a standard circuit board, research that could ultimately create consumer products that are smaller and more powerful than those currently available.

Space Photonics, which designs high-speed fiber-optic components, received a \$750,000 contract from the U.S. Air Force. Most home computers currently use a 56K modem that delivers 56,000 bits of information per second. Space Photonics engineers are currently building components that provide one gigabit per second, and are working on designs that will provide 10 gigabits, nearly 200,000 times faster than the 56K modems.

Space Photonics and AMDC have been GENESIS client firms since 1998. Located at the UA Engineering Research Center, GENESIS provides developing, technology-based entrepreneurs with technical expertise from UA faculty, staff and students, access to engineering laboratories and equipment, and office space and shared services.

A state agency, the Authority serves as a statewide funding resource for high quality scientific and technological projects. It endeavors to bring the benefits of science and technology to the people and state of Arkansas through scientific research, technology development, business innovation and education.

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